/262 cont./

754 most opportunities to meet evil spirits. Generally they do not need a teacher, but may look for their herbs by themselves. There are also many people, however, who would like to learn sorcery from other nyic, just as there are also supposed to nyic who instruct others in their art.

756 784 [834] [263] Avoidance prescriptions and taboos for the shaman include some sexual and dietary abstinence, without, however, being very extensive or strict. Intercourse with his wife is forbidden for him when he feels his "signs." Moreover, he may not eat any ají if possible, in order not to make Thunder too angry. Also, he may eat only very little salt, since Thunder likewise /263/ eats [787] no salt. For the séances, which always take place at night, he fasts the whole day, since a full stomach makes it difficult to feel the 756 "signs." The other avoidance rules for the shaman are the same 784 as for all other human beings. For example, one may not kill a 825 snail, for if he should touch it, he would become lazy. In like manner, the black woodpecker (ánza) may not be killed, since otherwise, while working, one would split the machete in the same way as the tail of the woodpecker is shaped. Young men are forbidden to take a stolen hen away from a fox, for then another man would take his bride or wife away from him. Only [262] old men may confidently eat such a hen, if they have first run around the house with a firebrand.

c) Shamanistic Aids

756 787 Among the shamanistic aids, the "signs" are the most important symptoms experienced, while the outward ceremonial gear is as meager as the whole Paez culture. The only ceremonial implement is the unadorned shaman's staff, the functional meaning of which, however, is far less important than the shamanistic "signs" (ítok). "They are like the pecking of a bird," the shaman Cerbeleón Niunda said of them, and Francisco Cuskue describes them as the irregular beating of his pulse. To be able to receive [278] and to interpret them is the basis of being a shaman. Knowledge of the medicinal herbs, the handling of the shaman's staff, in

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fact, even the visionary sight of Thunder are worthless by themselves, if the shaman does not receive any signs. By means of them the teyu discovers the cause of sickness and the means to be employed for healing it, which always consist of the dispensing of herbs. For this reason every shaman always has his fiber bag with all his medicinal herbs with him, in order to have them at hand and to be able to apply them at any time. Since, however, an illness does not have a physical cause, according to the opinion of the Paez, the herbs used for healing are not applied in accordance with the medical experiences of the shaman, but solely in accordance with his signs.

The herbs used by the shamans are the following (*):

* I am taking these, as well as some other data on the shamanism of the Paez, from the excellent summary by S. Bernal Villa (III) /see the bibliography in the foreign text, p. 323/.

čandúr, eš (Erythroxylon coca), bičač (Hevea?), čulko (Oxalis, sp.), čáyuts (Scutellaria racemosa Per.), čuwét, fisa, ečyútse čime (Labiada?), /264/ gwepekas (Urera boccifera L.), kwése (Lonchocarpus?), limonsflyo (Cymbopogon citratus), nyika, nyundayuskey, šu (Spagnum sp.), šuwés (Peperomia sp.), šulápe, šupenyí (Peperomia sp.), tātse, táyuske (Peperomia sp.), ul níny (Hibiscus abelmoschus L.), umsim (Myricia acuminata DC. Vell, aff.), vitubítskwe, wáhi (Nicotiana tabacum L.), yakúma, yúskay (Scleria cattarinensis Boeck).

Most of these herbs are first chewed by the shaman and then spat over the affected part. If a person is dying and his soul leaves his body from the heart by way of the upper arms, the pulse of the lower arms, and the finger tips, the herb čáyuts, for example, is spat by the shaman from the finger tips in the direction of the armpits, in order to check the departure of the soul. Only rarely is a tea brewed from the leaves.

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[For information on the various herbs and other pharmaceuticals used by the shaman in curing and purification ceremonies, see categories 755 and 783.]